design and development phase, which has been completed recently. It has been planned that the remaining aircraft will be upgraded at HAL, Nasik.

Appointment in management of Gun and Shell Factory, Cossipore

2006. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Management of the Gun and Shell Factory, Cossipore had sought release of vacancy order of 200 numbers from Ordnance Factory Board in January and February, 2000;

(b) whether more than 500 technically qualified Ex-Trade apprentices are awaiting employment after three to four years training in the above vacancies;

(c) whether the issue was taken up earlier also with him and with the Minister of State;

(d) if so, whether any action is being taken to fill up the vacancies through Ex-Trade apprentices; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAMRAJU): (a) Gun & Shell Factory, Cossipore requested for sanction of 171 posts to be filled by Ex-Trade Apprentices in February 2000. There was no proposal from the factory in January 2000.

(b) Yes. However, as per rules Ordnance Factories are not under any obligation to give employment to all Ex-Trade Apprentices as training is imparted as per statutory obligations.

(c) Ordnance Factory Board has, for the organisation as a whole, been taking up the issue of induction of fresh manpower for skill sustenance from time to time, by direct recruitment, including from Ex-Trade Apprentices.

(d) Ordnance Factory Board issued sanction on 12.10.2000 for filling up 50 vacancies by Ex-Trade Apprentices. Vacancies were released keeping in view the functional requirements and consistent load position of Gun & Shell Factory.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.